

ECONOMIC BALANCE: MEANS AND WANTS

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But we must reckon also with another ideological rift in tastes and desires, which would affect all three stages of our investigation, namely a rift which might be involved in the complex and composite nature of Nupe culture. It would separate, not social strata, but different sections of the population, different cultural groups within Nupe society. A rift of this kind does, in fact, exist with respect to the different cultural standards valid in town and country, in the Mohammedanized capital and the pagan or semi-pagan districts.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: NECESSITIES OF LIFE

The extent to which the economy of an individual or a family group is able to incorporate into its 'balance' wants placed lower or higher on the scale of cultural values gives us what is generally called the 'standard of living'. We shall find that it is possible to arrange these varying standards in certain well-defined groups or grades, and to embody them in a comprehensive economic stratification of the society. 511 ●

It will be best to begin with concrete illustrations of the economic balance achieved in Nupe households. Out of fifty household budgets which I have recorded I propose to select five representative examples, taken from different localities and differently organized household groups, in which we can study the main variations that occur. All these examples refer to peasant households. Unfortunately I found it impossible to work out budgets of this kind also for craftsmen and 'free professions' (with two exceptions to be quoted later). Their extremely fluid economy presented great difficulties; to reduce, in their case, income and expenditure to exact figures would have demanded much more time than I was able to devote to this task. However, just because these types of economy are more fluid and more easily adjustable to varying wants, they are of less interest to us than the more restricted and more rigid economy of the agriculturist.

Let me say a few words about the method by which I arrived at these records of Nupe household economy. I have examined households in Bida, Doko, Lemu, and Kutigi. The figures referring to the total farm-yield, and to the proportion of the produce kept for consumption or set aside for sale, were ascertained by inquiry. The nature of Nupe agriculture—the series of successive harvests, and the widely varying arrangements with regard to storage and sale of produce—precluded any more direct approach (e.g. by measuring the yield or the stores). However, there were important safeguards: first, as we have seen, the Nupe farmers are well acquainted with the use of standard measures, and indeed themselves use them to calculate their yield. Moreover, after a number of preliminary inquiries (in which I was helped by reliable informants) I could already form an opinion as to likely averages and individual deviations. Finally, whenever any dubious figures emerged I could verify them by independent inquiries of other household members. In this respect the tendency of the Nupe farmers to keep track of the contributions of the various family members to the common store proved of considerable assistance. 511
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*Household A**Tunga* near Bida. Labour unit: one man. Family of four

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<i>Crops and trees</i>	<i>Total yield</i>	<i>Kept for household consumption</i>	<i>Sold</i>	<i>Additional income</i>
Bulr.-millet	5 loads	All	..	Mat-weaving, for 9d. apiece. Total earnings 5s.
Late millet	3 "	"	..	
Sorghum	8 "	5 loads	3 loads, for 2s.	
Beans	v. little	All	..	
Sw. potatoes	?	"	All, for 3s.	
Cassava	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	5 loads	..	All, for 11. 3d.	

Income from farm produce	s.	d.
Total income	6	3
Money expenditure: Tax	11	3
	9	6

Household B

Bida. Labour unit: father and boy. Family of three

<i>Crops and trees</i>	<i>Total yield</i>	<i>Kept for household consumption</i>	<i>Sold</i>	<i>Additional income</i>
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Occasionally straw hat-making. Borrowed 1s. from relations for tax.
Late millet	6 loads	All	..	
Sorghum	6 "	"	..	
Beans	?	"	All, for 2s.	
Yam	6 loads	All	..	
Rice	31 gourds	10 gourds	21 gourds for 3s. 6d.	
Locust-beans	..	..	Sold the whole tree for felling to the Bida brick-works, for 4s. 6d.	

Income from farm produce	s.
Total income (incl. money loan)	10
Money expenditure: Tax	11
	11

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Household C

Tunga near Bida. Labour unit: father (old) and married son (invalid). Family of five

<i>Crops and trees</i>	<i>Total yield</i>	<i>Kept for household consumption</i>	<i>Sold</i>	<i>Additional income</i>
Bulr.-millet	Bad crop	No yield	..	Sold 2 young goats for 3s. each, in order to obtain the rest of the tax.
Late millet	10 loads	..	9 loads, for 9s.; 1 load given as <i>dza-nka</i> to <i>Makū</i>	
Sorghum	5 "	1 load	3 loads, for 3s.; 1 load given as <i>dza-nka</i> to <i>Makū</i>	
Beans	7 "	..	All, for 5½d.	
Locust-beans	9 "	..	All, for 3s.	

Income from farm produce	..	..	15 5½
Total income	..	..	21 5½
Money expenditure: Tax	..	..	21 0

Household D

Kutigi. Labour unit: father and two sons, one of them married. Family of seven

<i>Crops and trees</i>	<i>Total yield</i>	<i>Kept for household consumption</i>	<i>Sold</i>	<i>Additional income</i>
Bulr.-millet	20 loads	All	..	Family head: occasional hunting. Hides sold for 2d. to 4d. apiece; total earnings 11. 3d.
Late millet	15 "	13 loads	2 loads, for 11. 4d.	
Sorghum	20 "	10 "	10 loads, for 7s. 6d.	Sons: mat-weaving, for 6d. apiece; total earnings approx. 10s. p.a. (i.e. <i>bued</i> income). Each son contributes 3s. towards the family tax.
Yam	7 "	All	..	
Cassava	?	"	..	
Beans	2 loads	"	..	
Ground-beans	1 load	"	..	
Sw. potatoes	little	"	..	
Ground-nuts	5 loads	Only seed	Rest, for 3s. 6d.	
Bananas	?	All	..	
Locust-beans	3 loads	..	All, for 11. 3d.	
Palm-kernels	?	..	All, for £1 or 25s.	
Kola-nuts	3 loads	..	All, for 6s. 3d.	

Income from farm produce	..	..	..	£	s.	d.
Total income (incl. contribution from sons)	..	..	..	..	2	4 10
Money expenditure: Tax	..	..	..	..	1	13 0
Egbe work	..	..	..	..	6	8
Final instalment of bride-price for younger son	..	..	..	..	10	0

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Household E

Lemu. Labour unit: father and four sons, two of them married. Family of ten

Crops and trees	Total yield	Kept for household consumption	Sold	Additional income
Bulr.-millet	50 loads	20 loads	30 loads for 15s.	Family head: trade in rams and sheep.
Late millet	30 "	10 "	20 loads for 10s.	Total earnings approx. 10s. p.a.
Sorghum	40 "	20 "	20 loads for 13s. 6d.	Sons: bucc farm-work. Total earnings approx. 4s. p.a.
Beans	6 "	All	"	
Yam	?	A little	8 loads for 4s.	
Cassava	?	Eaten at once	"	
Sw. potatoes	?	" "	"	
Cotton	10 loads	"	All, for 15s.	
Red pepper	4 "	"	All, for 8s.	
Locust-beans	6 "	"	All, for 4s.	

Income from farm produce	£ s. d.
Total income	3 9 6
Money expenditure: Tax	approx. 4 0 0
Egbe work	2 7 0
Name-giving ceremony for grandchild	6 6
First instalment of bride-price for younger son	8 0
	17 0

511 The construction of these household budgets is designed to show the main division of resources into those which are utilized in kind, i.e. for food consumption, and those utilized for exchange, i.e. for the acquisition of commodities and the satisfaction of other, non-nutritive, wants. We have said that the latitude in satisfying wants beyond the 'minimum level' gives us the standards of living and economic stratification.

511 Now, it is characteristic that Nupe society, which is so conscious of its class stratification, is equally conscious of its economic stratification and the varying standards of living. Even the principle of the 'minimum point' of the scale of values, the existence of a minimum cost of living, is clearly understood and, what is more important, generally accepted. 262 I have worked out questionnaires referring to this minimum standard of living and collected answers from twenty men in Bida and the villages, of different classes and different degree of wealth. They all were in agreement on the essential points. Expressed in agricultural produce, i.e. staple food crops, calculated for a small family of four, the minimum annual cost of living amounts to 12 to 15 bundles of grain (of any variety) or 90 loads of yam, if the household relies on one of the two staple food crops; or, if both are combined, 6 to 8 bundles of grain and 40 to 50 loads of yam. Expressed in money, 1½d. per day is the lowest cost of living per adult. But this food, as my informants added, will hardly be nutritive, it would only 'make the belly swell'. With more nutritive food, the lowest cost of living is 3d. per day. Even this is not yet a high standard, for it excludes *na ma re na*, things 'that taste nice', e.g. sweet-meats, savouries, and suchlike. For a family of four or five I was given

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the following daily 'menu' corresponding to a standard of living slightly above the minimum: 511 ●
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Morning meal: corn-water or gruel with 'bread' (<i>fura</i>)	1½d.
Midday meal: cassava, beans, or rice	3d.
Evening meal: corn porridge	1½d.
Total cost	6d.

If fats, shea-butter, or palm-oil are added in form of sauce, the bill increases by another 1½d.; meat or fish, the addition of which would raise the meal to a much higher 'standard of living', cost 6d. a day extra. For example:

Morning meal: corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	1½d.-2d.
Midday meal: corn porridge	1½d.
palm-oil, greens, and spices	1-2d.
fish	3d.
Evening meal: rice	4d.
palm-oil, &c. (partly left over from midday meal)	0-3d.
meat or fish	2-3d.
Total cost	11. 1'3d.-11. 3'8d.

Calculating the cost of food for a family of this size for a week and taking into account that the morning meal often consists of food left over from the previous day, and that meat, fish, and certain savouries are only bought occasionally, we arrive at the sum of 8s. 9d. per week, or 11s. 3d. per day.

These figures refer to the cost of living in Bida, where the majority of the population have to buy their whole food. But in the village, food other than the staple crops—including fats, fish, and meat—has also to be bought for money. On the other hand, cost of living in the villages is slightly cheaper, as is shown in the following example, which is again calculated for four or five persons, and corresponds to a fairly high standard, comparable to the elaborate Bida 'menu' just quoted:

Morning meal: corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes	0-8d.
Midday meal: corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices	4d.
Evening meal: the same	4d.
Total cost	approx. 9d.

The standards of living in the village are also lower than in Bida: an average standard in the village would correspond to a low standard in Bida. Dried fish rather than meat is the main item on the menu, meat being eaten not more than once a week or, in poorer households, once in several weeks. Rice, which appears fairly regularly on the Bida menu, is rare in the village; sorghum-beer, on the other hand, which may replace a regular meal in the village, does not figure on the menu of Bida households. But if the very high standard of living characteristic of the Bida upper classes does not occur in the peasant households, the same is true of the other extreme, the very low standard of living; for although I have found many households in or near Bida which live on the very minimum level, these very low standards seem absent in the village.

Let me give a few concrete examples to illustrate the food economy in

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262 typical Nupe households. They are taken from four households in Bida (Nos. 1 and 2) and in the country (Nos. 3 and 4). 'Menu' No. 1 is that of a wealthy noble household, No. 2 that of an average trader's household, No. 3 that of a prosperous peasant household in Kutigi (household D in the list of household budgets given above), and No. 4 that of an average peasant household in the same village. All four examples were obtained about the same time, the end of May and beginning of June. B = morning meal (i.e. 'breakfast'), M = midday meal, E = evening meal.

No. 1

19.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
- M. Rice and fish.
- E. Rice and meat with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel.
- M. Rice and meat with shea-butter, onions, and spices.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel and bean-cakes.
- M. Rice and chicken.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with greens and spices.

22.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
- M. Rice and fish.
- E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

23.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and bean-cakes.
- M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
- M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

25.5.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel.
- M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

No. 2

18.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
- M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil.

19.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
- M. Cassava with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

20.5.1936.

- B. Beans cooked in thick palm-oil, with salt and pepper.
- M. Boiled cassava, with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, greens, and spices.

21.5.1936.

- B. Bean-cakes.
- M. Corn-porridge and fish, with shea-butter, &c.—left over from previous day.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

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22.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
- M. Corn-porridge.
- E. Rice and meat, with palm-oil and spices.

23.5.1936.

- B. Corn-water and corn-cakes.
- M. Rice and fish, with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

24.5.1936.

- B. Hot corn-water and corn-cakes.
- M. Sweet potatoes and palm-oil.
- E. Corn porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

Note that ground-nut cakes, though eaten repeatedly for the morning meal in this household, are absent in Menu No. 1. In the latter household it was explained to me that ground-nuts were 'out of season', and no longer good for making cakes—a culinary distinction which the less well-to-do (and less sophisticated) households do not follow.

No. 3

31.5.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel and beans.
- M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

1.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel and beans.
- M. Yam and beans, with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and meat, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

2.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel and beans.
- M. Corn-porridge and meat, from previous day.
- E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

3.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel.
- M. Boiled yam with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

4.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel and beans.
- M. Beans with palm-oil, salt, and pepper.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

5.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel.
- M. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.
- E. Rice and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

6.6.1936.

- B. Corn-gruel.
- M. Boiled yam, with palm-oil.
- E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

No. 4

13.6.1936.

- B. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.
- M. Cassava.
- E. Porridge and fish, with palm-oil (no greens).

14.6.1936.

- B. Corn-porridge, from previous day.
- M. Corn-porridge, left over from morning meal.
- E. Fresh corn-porridge with greens (no fish).

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15.6.1936.

B. Corn-porridge and very little fish (bought for 0.1d.), with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

M. Sorghum beer.

E. Corn-water and ground-nut cakes.

16.6.1936.

B. Nothing.

M. Raw cassava.

E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

17.6.1936.

B. Corn-gruel.

M. Corn-gruel and ground-nut cakes.

E. Corn-porridge and fish, with palm-oil, greens, and spices.

18.6.1936.

B. Hot corn-water and ground-nut cakes.

M. Corn-porridge.

E. Corn-porridge, left over from midday meal.

19.6.1936.

B. Cold corn-water and corn-cakes.

M. Cassava boiled in water.

E. Corn-porridge and palm-oil (no fish).

31/ In examining the budgets from the viewpoint of food economy, we find that in this one domain of wants they are already representative of widely varying standards of living. Measuring the produce available for food consumption in the various households against the standard of 12 to 15 bundles (loads) of grain per family of four, or 3 to 4 bundles of grain per head, we obtain the following relations:

Household A: family of four—13 loads, or over 3 loads per head.

Household B: family of three—12 loads, or 4 loads per head.

Household C: family of four—1 load, or $\frac{1}{4}$ load per head.

Household D: family of seven—43 loads of grain (also yam), or over 6 loads per head.

Household E: family of ten—50 loads, or 5 loads per head.

In other words, we find poverty, i.e. 'insufficiency of means', a certain marginal sufficiency, and also ample and prosperous, standards of living.

We can correlate the prosperity in this sense with certain other social factors.¹ The most prosperous households are found in Trans-Kaduna and in the country north of Bida (e.g. Lemu) where land is fertile and plentiful. Households with a large labour-unit are invariably more prosperous than households with a small labour-unit. The budget which expresses real poverty and insufficiency (C) comes from Bida, and from a small labour group whose efficiency was abnormally reduced: one of the two men who formed the labour unit was old and past work in age, and the other an invalid. I have spoken on different occasions of the detrimental effects upon production of the spreading dissolution of the large labour-unit. That a situation such as this could occur, that this *prima facie* inefficient productive arrangement which leads an old man and

¹ It will be understood that in this as in similar general statements I am referring not only to the selected examples, representative though they are, but to the whole material which I have examined.

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an invalid to work on their own, could at all be tolerated, reveals most conspicuously the inherent weakness in present-day labour organization. 571 ●

We turn now to the examination of the money surplus achieved in the various households. Here we find the same wide variations as in the examination of the output which was retained for food. But the two ranges of variation do not run parallel; which means that the Nupe peasant does not divide his above-minimum-output equally between nutritive wants and wants demanding money surplus. He may accumulate food-supplies up to what we may regard as the maximum at the cost of the money surplus (as in D); or he may go below the maximum in food-supplies in order to obtain a higher money surplus (as in E); or he may be forced to fall even below the minimum standard of food-supplies for the sake of a certain necessary money surplus (as in C). In order to understand the full significance of this we must anticipate here another demand upon resources which, though not expressing 'primary needs', possesses in native economy the same urgency and inevitability—tax. This demand was, in fact, already embodied in the budgets which we have drawn up. For when measuring 'sufficiency of means' with regard to the primary necessities of life we measured not ability to reach an adequate level of production, but ability to retain an adequate supply of produce after this other rigid demand had been met. Normally, every farmer would retain at least the necessary minimum supplies, which is easily achieved in the ample husbandry of prosperous households, but may prove impossible in the households which keep close to the margin. Here the free planning of the balance between essential food stores and produce for sale may be restricted by the necessity of providing the money 'surplus' for tax, even (as in C) to the degree of reducing food-supplies below the minimum level. Only after deducting the tax can we thus speak of 'real' surplus, in the sense of money resources that can be applied freely to wants, and only with respect to this final surplus can we speak strictly of sufficiency and prosperity.

With regard to surplus in this sense the correlation between large labour-units and high degree of 'sufficiency' is no longer true. In household D the family head could secure a money surplus only by claiming contributions from the *bued* work of his sons—against the rules of *efako* collaboration. In a great many cases (not recorded here) large labour-units, though able to produce a large surplus output, could not secure a corresponding money surplus. The explanation lies in the low market-price which ordinary agricultural produce commands. If large quantities have to be sold at once—as they must be where a large sum of money (e.g. for tax) has to be found by a single producer (i.e. the head of the labour-unit)—the price will be even more unfavourable. Only where the production comprises commercial crops, or generally crops commanding a high market-price, will it be possible to combine both aspects of surplus. We find, on the other hand, that households in which a handicraft is practised in addition to farm-work attain a higher measure of prosperity than households of farmers pure and simple. A profitable handicraft can procure ready money for certain urgent expenses, above all, tax, and thus free the household from the necessity of selling a too

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511 large proportion of the produce, or selling it in a hurry, at unfavourable prices.

511 From nutritive wants we proceed to the wants involved in the 'primary
356 need' of shelter. The upkeep or building of houses represents a want which, occurring at much longer and more irregular intervals, does not figure conspicuously in the annual household budget. In the village, upkeep and building of houses is mainly a question of co-operative labour, involving little or no money outlay. Smaller house repairs, above all thatching, become necessary every three to five years; more complete repairs, such as rebuilding of huts or of the compound wall, are reckoned to occur every ten to twelve years. The small repairs are carried out by the household group, and take rarely more than two or three days. For larger repairs the help of neighbours and relations must be enlisted on *egbe* scale; they last much longer, according to the body of workers that can be mustered, and the work may often have to be interrupted for a day or two if the workers have other tasks in hand. Most building work in the village is left till the beginning of the rains, when the ground (from which the clay for building is dug) is soft, the grass for thatching not too dry (such grass is said to last less long), and when the people are still free from more exigent farm-work. We may add that the building of more elaborate houses of the kind that is found in the town and also in certain villages entails the employment of expert labour, and thus money expenditure, which varies widely with the style and scale of the work.

511 Finally, we add the 'derived wants' involved in agricultural produc-
241 tion. Under this heading we include repairs and purchase of tools and the financing of *egbe* work. In the same category falls the payment of a fixed land rent in kind which obtains in the area round Bida (as in our example C). I have only partly been able to include these wants in the household budgets. However, the widespread efforts to economize, for example, on the cost of *egbe* work, or the neglected appearance of many of the sumptuous Bida houses, reveal the difficulties which many households find to-day in coping with these wants.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS

511 The next step in our inquiry is to ascertain the demands embodied in cultural standards which the Nupe peasant has to meet out of the surplus (if surplus there be) derived from his production. We can group these demands under three headings. (1) Demands implied in kinship duties. In so far as the household or kinship group coincides with the labour-unit these demands overlap with those we listed under 'maintenance of labour'. (2) Demands implied in duties towards the community—religious, political, or social. (3) Certain personal requirements which are regarded, by convention, as essential, and even indispensable.

Under the first heading we list the expenses of kinship ceremonies and feasts—the name-giving ceremony for a new-born child, wedding feasts, and burial and funeral ceremonies. These expenses are borne primarily

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by the family head in whose house the ceremony is performed; but he can also count on contributions from the various relations and friends who attend the ceremony as guests of the house. We have noted the modern tendency among peasants to replace the traditional gifts in kind with contributions in money, which are customary in Bida. These expenses vary widely with wealth and status. The minimum costs—which interest us here—amount to about 3s. to 5s. in the name-giving ceremony and 8s. to 10s. in marriage and funeral ceremonies. In the case of junior family members this group of kinship expenses also includes certain occasional gifts in kind to elder relatives, especially the family head. In one Doko household (not quoted among our examples) a young farmer who worked on his own gave his whole produce of beans (worth 2s.) to his father and elder brother. In another household, in Bida, a man shared his crop of maize with his elder brother, who was the family head. Family heads, on the other hand, have to provide for the costs of education of their children or younger brothers (so far as it involves expenditure), e.g. the apprenticeship in the workshop of a craftsman, or the attendance at a Koran school or the Government school. They must bear the expenses that might be caused by illness—the purchase of medicines or of the services of diviner or barber-doctor. 'Pocket-money', finally, for children or junior family members is, as we have seen, supplied in the form of *bucd* work, which they are encouraged to take up.

Bride-price

The largest item under this heading is the payment of bride-price, which devolves, in traditional practice at least, on the head of the family section that is united in the labour-unit. I have pointed out already that the bride-price also involves the accumulation of wealth, and comparatively long-range planning and saving.

The bride-price is always reckoned in money, although it may be paid partly in kind; the gifts in kind, however, which may form part of the bride-price, such as cloth and beads, all have a definite money value, and must be bought for money. The Nupe bride-price, called *ewó yawó*, 'money of marriage', comprises a series of payments of varying amount, each of which is known by a special name: we have, first, the gift of the Greeting; we have further two gifts called Small Thanks and Great Thanks, respectively, the latter which represents bride-price proper, being sometimes referred to by the modern Hausa-Mohammedan term *sadeiki*; then there is the Money for Henna, to buy the henna with which the bride will adorn herself for the marriage ceremony, the Money for Pots, with which pots and cooking utensils will be bought, and finally a small gift to the bridesmaids who accompany the bride when she enters her husband's house for the first time. In the country these last two gifts are a comparatively recent introduction, having originated and spread from Bida. In addition to these various 'part payments' there is an annual gift of produce which is presented by the father of the bridegroom to the father of the bride during the period between the formal betrothal and the final marriage ceremony. The whole bride-price is

511 rarely paid over at once; as a rule the various part-payments are made in
583 the course of three to five years, in the order just given. The first gift, the Greeting, is meant to seal the betrothal and the agreement of the parents of bride and bridegroom. The various gifts listed after the Great Thanks are left till immediately before the marriage ceremony. Only the two largest 'instalments', Small Thanks and Great Thanks, can be paid partly in the form of gifts of cloth or beads; all other gifts must be in money. Let me give a concrete illustration. The bride-price of N., of Kutigi, who married in 1934, consisted of the following payments, all of which were in money:

	£	s.	d.
Greeting		1	6
Small Thanks	10	0	
Great Thanks	3	0	0
Money for Henna		5	0
Money for Pots		10	0
Gifts to bridesmaids		2	6
Four annual gifts of food, to the total value of		10	0
Total	£4	19	0

[56] Bride-price in Nupe has undergone great changes. From £3 in pre-British days it has risen later to £10, £15, and even £20. Recently it has fallen again to a more modest sum, between £5 and £10. The height of the bride-price has, in fact, caused the Administration to intervene in 1934, and to lay down a maximum amount of £7. On the whole, the people welcomed the reduction. But it has not been adopted uniformly; I have found a bride-price of £9 and £10 still being paid two years after the law was enacted. In very poor households, on the other hand, the reduction has merely academic significance, as these people may not be able to afford even that amount. My informations were that originally the bride-price represented a fixed sum—*gba shita*, 120,000 cowries (£3)—which did not vary with, nor depend on, prosperity or social status, as it does to-day. Similarly every item of the bride-price was fixed traditionally, the amounts in cowries being frequently used as alternative terms for some of these payments. This is the series of payments in the traditional Nupe bride-price:

	£	s.
<i>Gba</i> (lit. 2,000 cowries—a preliminary gift absorbed to-day in the Greeting)		1
Greeting, or <i>gbaota</i> (lit. 6,000 cowries)		3
Small Thanks		12
Great Thanks		2 10
Total	£3	6

With the rise, and subsequent fall, in the bride-price its amount was made dependent upon the varying standards of living. It is significant that the large items in the bride-price, Small and Great Thanks, have remained comparatively unchanged; the changes affected chiefly the smaller gifts, new ones being included, or increased or decreased in amount. Now a large bride-price, which comprises all these various gifts, is still the ideal. But certain new ways have been found to harmonize the ideal with lower standards

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of living. To-day a distinction which did not exist in former times is universally recognized, between bride-price entailed in ordinary marriage and bride-price paid in the case of *yawo dengi*, marriage in the family: the latter commands a lower bride-price, approximately £3, i.e. the original uniform bride-price. In every case in which I examined the relation of 'marriage in the family' to outside marriage my informants emphasized that there were more family marriages to-day than formerly because it had become so difficult to pay the high bride-price. We see, then, that the bride-price was not simply reduced in amount uniformly; rather a certain context was introduced—invented almost—in which a lower bride-price could be legitimately accepted. The lower bride-price, which would run counter to traditional cultural standards, was thus given a certain qualified sanction by the society. However, even the low bride-price cannot always be provided by the family head. And here we find another adjustment to the lower standards of living, namely, the spreading practice to pay bride-price only for the eldest son, while younger sons must either contribute to, or bear themselves, the cost of their bride-price. The traditional duty of the family head is expressed only in a symbolic transaction: the young man who has to contribute his own bride-price in many cases still hands over the amount to the family head, who will then take all the necessary steps and carry through all the negotiations.

To the bride-price we must add its counterpart, the dowry which the bride brings into marriage and which is paid by her father. Though paid over in one, immediately before the marriage ceremony, the dowry like the bride-price also implies accumulation of wealth over a long period. The amount of the dowry used to correspond exactly to the low, traditional bride-price. Although it fell short of the exorbitant bride-price of recent years, it has been adjusted to the level of a moderately high bride-price (as represented in our example), which proves clearly the underlying intention to balance it against the bride-price even to a degree of mathematical exactitude. Unlike the bride-price, the dowry does not consist in money payments, but in various gifts and contributions in kind. It is reckoned to provide the young bride with cooking utensils, pots, and clothes, sufficient to last her for the first four or five years of the marriage; it also provides food—very excellent food—for the newly wedded couple, so that for the first month or two they are independent of the earnings of the husband or contributions by his family. This is the dowry that corresponds to the example of bride-price quoted above:

	£	s.
10 large pots, costing 1s. each, representing a value of	10	10
Beads, to wear round the waist, worth	1	15
5 pieces of cloth, worth between 5s. and 7s. each, representing a value of	1	10
Two months' food-supply, worth	1	10
Total	£3	5

Let us for the moment interrupt this description and examine the economic and sociological significance of the changes in bride-price. The question of the sociological significance or 'function' of bride-price

511 has greatly engaged the attention of anthropologists. Yet the various
583 answers which have been found, showing no little disagreement, mostly
disregard the fact that institutions never subserve one single purpose,
but rather combine ('amalgamate' as Malinowski puts it) a number of
social purposes in their structure. The overt purpose of bride-price is
clearly that of securing to a man the various legal rights over a woman
which are embodied in marriage. Marriage marks the end of certain
rights held over the woman by her own kin, above all, her parents, and
their replacement by the new rights vested in the husband and his kin.
Bride-price in this sense is adequately defined as 'an indemnification for
... a ... surrender of rights'.¹ However, as the bride-price is not
supplied and received by bridegroom and bride themselves but by their
parents or other senior family members, the transaction also has the two-
fold social significance of actuating existing kinship bonds (between the
bridegroom and his relations who provide the bride-price for him, and
similarly between the bride and her family), and of confirming new kin-
ship bonds which stretch, not between the two individuals, but between
their families and kinship groups. The transaction of bride-price in this
sense has the significance of a contract, to which the two families are
the guarantors. The same applies to the parallel transaction of the dowry.
Finally, a bride-price, or dowry, of considerable dimensions necessitates
the accumulation of wealth and careful economic planning. Bride-price
can thus also be said to provide a stimulus for production and economic
enterprise in general—one of the motives which every society provides,
and needs, to impel it to 'produce, to muster, to count, and publicize its
wealth'.² This last aspect of the purposefulness of bride-price is, of
course, not present in the conscious thought of the people themselves.
It expresses a purpose or need read into the facts by the student of
society. The first two purposes of bride-price, on the other hand, repre-
sent conscious motives of conduct, and the degree of their consciousness
becomes evident in the changes which bride-price has undergone in Nupe.

Now, in the traditional Nupe bride-price the aspect of 'indemnification'
is greatly overshadowed by the other two aspects. As we have seen,
wealth was not 'given' but merely exchanged in the strict sense of the
word, the bride-price being balanced exactly against the dowry. When
bride-price increased disproportionately, far outstripping the dowry, the
element of indemnification and payment as such came to the foreground.
The people themselves link this surprising rise with the new economic
and political development under British rule: 'Prices were high, and
everyone had money.' To some extent this was no doubt due to an in-
creased demand, the greater prosperity showing itself in a rising scale of
polygamy. Partly also the motive of 'indemnification' gained a new,
additional, significance, that of display for the sake of prestige. But the
higher bride-price also showed the effectiveness of the third, economic,
factor: for in the highly stimulated economic system the traditional
stimulus embodied in the bride-price had to be increased in order to
keep pace with the new, higher, level of production and expenditure.

¹ A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, in *Iowa Law Review*, xx, 1935, p. 295.

² D. M. Goodfellow, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

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This interdependence of bride-price and level of production also explains the limited success, among the more prosperous sections of the population, of the attempts of the Administration to fix the bride-price at a lower and, as it were, arbitrary figure. 511 583

Indeed the development of bride-price under the economic stress of the last decade shows how firmly the new 'want' of higher bride-price had struck root. The solution which the people themselves worked out left the 'indemnification' and the 'economic' aspect of the bride-price intact; it achieved the necessary adjustment by reassessing the 'sociological' or kinship aspect. The contribution of the family to the bride-price of its junior members was reduced to the symbolic transaction of the family head acting on behalf of the bridegroom who must himself provide the bride-price; above all, the new rules allowed a reduction in the bride-price in family marriages, i.e. marriages in which the marriage ties do not establish new, but utilize already existing kinship bonds.

We may mention here certain marriage rules customary among the upper classes of Nupe in which an outwardly similar result is achieved by a somewhat different process of reasoning. We have learned that bride-price is kept low in class endogamous marriages among the nobility; a man of status may also marry his daughter to one of his *bara*, and himself put up the bride-price, so that in effect no exchange of wealth takes place; and there is, finally, the custom among the upper classes to marry their daughters with a very low, nominal, bride-price to *Mallams*—the remission of the bride-price being regarded as a pious act. In these cases the bride-price is kept artificially low in order to ensure that the women of the aristocracy should all be married to men of the same class, or should marry certain men whom they would be unable to marry if the bride-price were high: the political and religious gain balances the material sacrifice.

The institution of bride-price in Nupe gives us an exceptionally clear picture of the multitudinous structure of institutions. It also illustrates the discriminating action of economic evaluation, which, out of the number of social purposes subserved in the institution, fastens upon certain specific purposes for transformation into concrete economic wants. Yet those that are not thus transformed need not be purposes which have lost their significance entirely, but may reveal it indirectly, in the form of 'theoretical values'. We recall the disintegration of the institution of bride-price in present-day Bida, in the case of those young labourers who spend their money among other things on 'women' instead of saving it for bride-price. Let us realize that in a society like Nupe, in which traditional morality forbids pre-marital sexual intercourse, the 'indemnification' aspect of bride-price also implies the purchase of legitimate sexual satisfaction. Now, these young labourers have discovered that to-day sexual satisfaction can be bought more cheaply, and without incurring the obligation of marriage. Short-sightedly, they perceive only this one need and disregard the other aspects of marriage and bride-price—the need of founding a family, of establishing new kinship bonds, and of ensuring continuity of the group. They admit these other needs—in theory; yet these needs are present, concretely, in 511 583 936

571 the minds of the older generation (though it is unable to enforce its
583 authority), and they will be present, we may assume, also in the minds
836 of the young men themselves when they reach a more mature age and understanding.

511 The economic demands which we must list under the second heading—
621 demands implied in duties towards the community—are comparatively light. In village economy they are embodied in the regular contributions to village rituals in money or kind, and in occasional gifts to the chief (mostly gifts of kola-nuts or produce, worth between 3d. and 6d.). To give an example of the former: the total cost of a village ritual of moderate dimensions comes to 10s., which sum would be divided among, say, twenty households. But rituals may also be celebrated both more lavishly, and on a much smaller scale, with a cost between 3s. and 6s.¹ In Bida we have again certain expenses entailed in religious obligations—alms to Mallams, the traditional killing of a ram on the day of the *Sallah* or, occasionally, labour and money spent on the building of one of the small mosques in which neighbours and relatives worship.² Logically, tax should have been listed in this group of expenses.

511 The last group of 'cultural requirements'—personal wants—is the
241 most fluid and the most difficult to outline. It follows most closely
534 economic stratification and the varying standards of living. As we shall see later, almost every want in this group is seen against the standards set by the social *élite* of the country. In certain respects, however, we can attempt to define certain minimum wants even in this field. Thus every family head is expected to possess, in addition to his simple working clothes, at least one 'good' dress, a dark-blue or white gown, in which he would appear at meetings in the house of the chief and at various ceremonial occasions. Similarly he should own a white turban in addition to the straw hat or cap which he wears on the farm, ornamented sandals of leather, and a stick or carved staff to carry about; he should wear a heavy glass bangle round the arm, possibly a finger-ring and various charms of the kind that are sold by Hausa traders on the markets of the country.³ A major failure to achieve these standards of personal requirements is regarded as a sign of poverty and disgrace. Often have I listened to old men complaining about the sad state of affairs which compelled them to be content with a shabby cloth or cap when gown and turban were more fitting to their age and status.

511 But here we must take into account that cultural 'rift' between urban
369 and rural standards of which I have spoken earlier in this chapter. Many wants which either do not exist, or do not exist in the same urgency, in the village are considered essential in Bida. Here the closeness of the social *élite*, both in the literal sense of the word and in the sense of existing social contacts, raises the standards of living. In Bida, where one

¹ See my article on the *Gummu*, p. 99, n. 2.

² The building itself is done by the people, the roofing and thatching by the professional builders of Bida. The costs were, in a concrete case, 10s., and were divided among five households.

[789] ³ These charms consist of a piece of paper supposed to be inscribed with a verse of the Koran or a Mohammedan formula of blessing, which is sewn in leather, and worn round the arm or neck.

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can change one's profession and try new means of livelihood, these 'minimum' wants can be studied most profitably in the individuals who have abandoned their original occupation in order to better their standard of living. When discussing with labourers the reasons for their change of profession, I was given this as a typical reply: 'We are Bida people, not peasants; we are not satisfied to live as peasants do. We are not content with one gown and one cap; we want to go to the evening market and spend money; we want to make presents at the feasts in the houses of our friends, and we also want women.' Over half of these men were unmarried. Although their wages were comparatively high (7s. a week), they could not save enough for the bride-price—'our money disappears at once', they said.

The examples of household budgets from Bida which I have given above must then be interpreted with these viewpoints in mind. I will add here two more examples, of typically urban households, i.e. non-farming households, one of a weaver, and the other of a hat-maker, in Bida. The scope and money surplus of these budgets does not differ essentially from that of the peasant households. But even where the surplus seems larger, in figures, it is in effect more restricted. Note that the more prosperous of the two men, the weaver, is as yet unmarried. The less fortunate of the two, the hat-maker, had moreover given up hat-making this same year, and had become a labourer. It is not a paradox to say that the poor in Bida are poorer than the poor in the rural districts.

Household F

Bida. Profession: weaver, aged 30, unmarried

Output	Income	Additional income
48 pieces of cloth p.a., sold for 4s. to 4s. 6d.	Profit per cloth 8d. to 1s. 2d.	Farming on garden-plots close to the house, producing about a quarter of the annual food consumption.

Total earnings . . . £2. 8s. p.a.

Money expenditure:	£ s. d.
own tax	11 0
contribution to tax of father (shared with brother)	2 6
contribution to costs of food and clothing of father	4 0
minimum cost of living for himself	8 0
Total	£1 5 6

Household G

Bida. Profession: hat-maker, aged 35, one wife

Output	Income	Additional income
Approx. 50 hats p.a., sold for 8d. each	Profit 5d. per hat.	Borrowed 2s. from wife

Total earnings . . . £1

Money expenditure:	£ s. d.
tax	9 6
minimum cost of living	12 0
Total	£1 1 6

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It is impossible and unnecessary to reduce to £ s. d. the multitudinous forms of expenditure which fall under the heading of 'cultural requirements'. We have already seen that most often the surplus which can be derived from the main occupation is not large enough to cover them all. The various attempts to reduce or avoid expenditure, or to discover additional sources of income, are convincing evidence of this. To us, the most essential question is the selection and order of preference of expenses on which the hard-pressed household decides to economize. Individual differences play, of course, a certain part. In the quarter of the Bida beadworkers, for example, I saw among a number of dilapidated and neglected houses one whose excellent condition and nicely ornamented *katamba* spoke of the care which the inhabitants devoted to its upkeep. The financial position of the different families in the quarter was the same, yet one, to use the familiar Nupe expression, had 'made an effort' while the others had let things drift. Nevertheless, individual variations appear to be of little account in the general picture. The main differences occur, not between individuals, but between groups, that is, between the urban and rural population. I have just spoken of the young men of Bida who will forgo marriage (involving the bride-price) rather than the pleasures of town-life; they will spend money on dresses and feasts rather than contribute to the cost of the repairs of the family home. Perhaps the most striking illustration of this attitude was the utterly neglected state of the house of the guild-head of the carpenters and builders. Although the family numbered eight adult men apart from the old family head (two of whom had jobs in the workshops), and although house repairs were their profession, the men did not devote more than the absolutely necessary time and labour to the upkeep of the house, keeping the sleeping-huts in repair but letting compound wall and entrance hut go to rack and ruin. With a little money in hand, most Bida men will insist on a sumptuous marriage feast or naming ceremony for child or grandchild rather than save it for other expenses. I have twice attended such lavish feasts in neglected houses, in families whose income I knew to be small and precarious. But even the men with large and secure incomes will live above their means. Certain highly paid officials of the N.A. were heavily in debt to local traders and the European stores, having spent lavishly on dresses, luxuries, gifts to friends, and various forms of entertainment.

If in Bida expenditure on ostentatious display and on social obligations conforming to the standards of living which spread downward from the top of the social scale takes precedence of the more sober demands of bride-price, maintenance of the house, or saving in general, the villagers take the opposite view. In a small pagan village, for example, an annual ceremony had been postponed for three months for lack of money; in another case the same ceremony had been performed for three years in succession on a very small scale, owing to 'bad times'. Economies of this kind occur even in prosperous households: in the family whose budget I have quoted above under E the marriage feast of the eldest son had been postponed for one year so that it could be celebrated together with the naming ceremony of the first child, thus

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halving the costs of the festivity. In many essentially pagan villages Mohammedan burials are now becoming the fashion partly because, as I have reasons to believe, they are cheaper than the more elaborate pagan funeral feasts. Are then traditional customs such weak incentives, and regarded as of so little importance, that they are easily modified and even abandoned? Or shall we interpret this lack of appreciation as being due to an eminently reasonable attitude of the Nupe peasant? The answer is that the Nupe peasant or craftsman has little or no alternative choice. He is faced with two rigid, inescapable, demands which, between them, eliminate nearly all freedom of choice: one is maintenance of labour, involving food-supplies, clothing, and, to some extent at least, payment of bride-price for the labour-group on the co-operation of which the livelihood of the family depends; the other, even more rigid, demand is tax. The surrender of all these cultural wants is a result, not of 'reasonableness' or free choice, but essentially of external pressure.¹ That they still represent valid 'values', capable of determining social behaviour, is shown in that radical solution to secure their satisfaction individually if it proved impossible to secure them for the whole group, even at the risk of destroying the labour-unit.

The part played by tax in this failure of the Nupe household to adjust itself to the various cultural requirements was shown clearly in our analysis of the household budgets. We have seen that the balance could be maintained without difficulty only where a home industry (which, as we have seen, is carried out as individual work) could be relied on as a subsidiary means of the family income. Administrative Officers are well aware of this fact. Indeed, some are of the opinion that additional handicrafts or similar occupations, for example, work as temporary labourers, should be encouraged as a means of procuring money for tax without deranging the general scheme of household economy. Two Administrative Officers, of long experience, have pointed out to me that among the Hausa it is an established custom for young peasants to travel during the dry season and seek work of this kind, which would later enable them to pay their tax without difficulty. I am not qualified to discuss the fiscal implications of such a policy. But I may be allowed to point out its probable sociological and psychological effects, namely, that the encouragement of temporary labour of individuals must further, and indeed favour, that break-up of the labour- and family-unit the beginnings of which are already visible.

STANDARDS OF LIVING: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

We turn to the highest standard of living, that accepted by the upper classes of Nupe. Their needs and demands, the 'things they do' with their wealth, can again be grouped under the three headings which

¹ It must be said that certain Administrative Officers regard native festivities which fall in the time when tax is being collected as definitely conflicting with the prompt payment of tax. I have already mentioned (see p. 64) that in Bida Emirate all festivities (which, incidentally, happened to include certain harvest and fertility rites) were forbidden for a certain period until tax arrears had been paid.

511 characterize the standards of living of the lower social strata—with their
 556 meaning significantly altered. For 'maintenance of labour' read increase
 of capital and wealth; for 'demands of the community' dictates of status
 and prestige. The latter pervade the whole field of expenditure. Ex-
 penditure of wealth in any form, whatever its primary and avowed pur-
 pose, represents expenditure for the sake of status and prestige at the
 same time.

Investment of capital in human labour—slaves, pawns, or clients—
 also enhances the prestige of the man who can afford such investment
 and the life of leisure which it entails. The lavish scale of kinship feasts
 similarly reflects social status. Presents on a generous scale, to the king
 or influential noblemen, or liberal hospitality as befits the man of sub-
 stance, are at the same time practical means of winning the favour of
 social superiors and securing a reliable political following. In the house
 of a Bida nobleman of moderately high standing, for example, six *bara*
 who lived with him, and five *bara* who lived outside, in their own houses,
 were daily guests at at least one meal—a hospitality which very nearly
 doubled household expenses.¹

511 In a society in which marriage is by bride-price, and by high bride-
 554 price at that, the marriage arrangements must also become an index of
 595 wealth and status. Wealth and status are infallibly reflected in the
 number of wives a man possesses. We have seen that, while small
 peasants or small craftsmen and traders are content with one or two
 wives, no Bida man of standing would have less than four, and many
 even considerably more (whether legitimate wives or concubines). We
 will not exaggerate the share of prestige and status in this 'investment':
 the practice in the houses of the nobility to 'pension off' ageing wives
 and replace them by young attractive girls shows the contribution of
 more concrete motives also. On the other hand, wealthy Bida families
 will pride themselves in marrying off their sons at an early age, four to
 five years before they reach what is normally regarded as marriageable
 age. This is clearly done for the sake of prestige of the parents rather
 than for the benefit of the boy-husband, who, for example, may still be
 a pupil in the Government school (I have known of two such).

511 This twofold significance of economic incentives among the *élite* of
 554 Nupe society is no less clearly pronounced in expenditure of a more
 565 personal nature. 'Clothes make the man' in Nupe as elsewhere; in the
 484 possession of arms one sees not only fighting equipment, and in the
 possession of a horse not only a means of transport, but symbols of rank
 and status. I will conclude this list with the description of one cultural
 incentive which carries the concept of status and prestige into a rather
 remote domain of social life—travelling. Travelling forms indeed part
 of the life of the Nupe gentleman, and the young men of the higher
 nobility, especially the princes of the royal house, are sent, like their
 brothers in Victorian England, on a traditional Grand Tour. It takes
 them through the northern Emirates, to the cities and courts of famous

¹ The total consumption at the midday meal was approximately 5 lb. of
 porridge, made with fish and palm-oil sauce. The share of the family, including
 the family head, his wives, and his children, was 3 lb., that of the *bara* 2 lb.

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rulers, with whom they stay as honoured guests, and whom they will repay, one day, by similar hospitality extended to their young relations. (I have mentioned, in a different context, how I met two princes from Sokoto whose Grand Tour had taken them to the court of the *Etsu Nupe* in Bida.) The noble tourists enjoy their travels and enjoy—as they put it—‘seeing the world’. But this incentive of travelling for travelling’s sake with which their education and cultural background inculcate them also serves, indirectly, the political purpose of fostering personal contacts and ties of friendship between the ruling families of Nigeria and, more specially, the widespread Fulani empire.

We must now ask ourselves to what extent these wants and incentives apply to the society at large and determine (more or less) the economic decisions of the people. We must ask, more particularly, whether there do not exist ‘upper limits’ by which the economic ambitions of the various classes are bounded—whether by choice or of necessity. Such limits exist in the form of objects and values which have come to be regarded as fixed symbols of political status and which, like status itself, are excluded from free economic choice, being attainable only by the ladder of social promotion. As fixed symbols of status, much as a uniform or decoration in our society, the glazed turban of the nobility, or the right to carry a silver sword, cannot be coveted as such. This limitation has also been accepted with respect to the recent innovation, the clock in the glass case carried by the body-servant of a noble master: the people outside the ranks of the nobility have not attempted—as well they might—to possess themselves of this new emblem of rank.

But though promotion to political status and acquisition of its paraphernalia represent things that ‘cannot be bought’ (we shall discuss certain exceptions later), most of the features characteristic of the social life on these more exalted planes are, in theory, of the nature of universal economic wants. Beautiful clothes, costly turbans, and the possession of a horse are widely desired and can be acquired by anyone who can afford the expense. Even wants which are so far beyond the means or labour which commoners and peasants can muster that for this reason alone they seem unlikely to become concrete ambitions outside the *élite* of the country, represent yet common wants and ideals. Thus we find the ornate high-gabled square or round entrance hut which is typical of the large houses of the Bida nobility also in certain villages, put up by chiefs or prosperous family heads. Beautifully ornamented houses of a more modest type, moreover, are found everywhere, in every section or stratum of the population. Now, one of the most convincing proofs of the universality of these economic wants is the absence of all unfavourable comments, especially in the form of ridicule, with respect to individuals reaching out for goals not normally attained in their station of life. This is a significant illustration: in the small village of Doko I observed one house built in an unusually sumptuous style—with coloured earthenware plates inlaid in the walls of the *katamba*. It belonged to a musician, an ordinary ‘commoner’, who had been very successful in his profession. The people who told me about the house and its owner admitted that he was neither a titled elder nor in any way

511 a person of consequence, but did not find it at all out of place that he
554 later that in the Bida age-grade associations young men of low birth can
even taste the thrill of having special drum-signals and songs composed
for them like the members of the nobility.

511 Polygamy is another characteristic instance. The large-scale poly-
554 gamy of the Nupe aristocracy remains beyond the reach of all other
classes. Polygamy as it exists in the houses of the Nupe kings must even
545 be regarded as a royal prerogative and thus as a fixed symbol of status.
Yet polygamy on a more modest scale represents another universal
want, the effectiveness of which can be studied in every stratum of
society, and when peasants tell you of the 'good old times' when their
chiefs and elders were able to marry large numbers of wives, they ex-
press the effectiveness of this incentive.¹

511 We may also mention the demands of hospitality, which are recog-
554 nized among the poor as well as the rich. Inability to fulfil these
demands is regarded as a definite deprivation. Even in small peasant
574 households will you find 'permanent' guests—persons who have been
adopted into the household and may even be supported by their hosts
when they are too old, or too ill, to gain their own living. Significantly,
they were described to me as *ke bara na*, 'a kind of *bara*'.

511 One of the common ideals of the people of Nupe demands closer in-
461 vestigation. The reliance on employed labour by the privileged sections of
the society establishes a separate leisured class, which lives by the labours
of others and gains its livelihood to a large extent from the 'interest'
borne by their human capital. Evidently, 'leisure' is a relative concept.
In a society where the large majority works (say) ten hours a day, a
group which can gain its livelihood by working only half the time repre-
sents already, comparatively speaking, a 'leisured class'. Thus for Nupe,
as for every society, the definition of the leisured class must remain fluid.
The well-to-do traders, the 'intelligentsia' of the Mallams, the rich
landowners, and the well-paid N.A. officials, all are, in different measure,
members of the leisured class compared with the hard-working farmers,
craftsmen, or manual labourers. Let us understand the full import of
this fact. Many forms of enjoyment depend upon leisure: recreation
and aesthetic pleasures; among women, the possibility of keeping young
and attractive. They all form part of the standard of living which is
typical of the highest social stratum of Nupe. Again, they become, as
such, also incentives for Nupe society at large, and affect the evaluation
of specific occupations. We have studied their effectiveness in such
reactions as the break-up of the family labour-unit under the influence
of what we have called the 'new values and temptations' spreading from
the town; we shall discover an even more conspicuous instance in the
spreading of the Mallam profession.

¹ It is impossible to test the correctness of their sometimes rather extravagant
claims. Yet the psychological reality of the incentive is unaffected by such
questions of historical truth.